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## Short Story ~ Darkness



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### Chapter 1 by A\_Merry\_Kat

I am young, I have so much life left. At least that's what they tell me. I don't believe them for an instant. I'm sure I'm a dead woman walking.

My name is Arin, and I'm cursed, that's the only explanation. You don't need to know anything more than this, my name is Arin and I am cursed.

The doctors try to "help" me, but they just can't understand the problem. The problem is this: It's alive, and it's everywhere. Children know, some animals know, but most adults have already forgotten the reason they feared it. The dark is what I fear, and it haunts me. I fear it will haunt me till my death...

I decided it could not be worse if I got away, escape! What a thrill it would be... I was dead wrong. It was dark out, that should have dissuaded me, but my mind was set to escape at the shift change, day shift to night. As the doctors went in and out, I asked to be taken to the balcony for air. One of the nurses took me, and left, knowing I was observed by others nearby. As the balcony emptied and the nurse watching me left to end her shift, I jumped. I was only on the second floor, and landed in the bushes. As soon as I hit the bushes, I ran.

Running, across the field, nearing the woods, nearer, nearer.... The first shout sounded, ringing loud, more shouts. I looked over my shoulder, ragged blonde hair flying. They were after me, but

I feared the dark more than I feared what they could do to me. As I ran, though, as I saw the darkness of the forest, the only way to escape was to run. No less, I finally realized my error, I slowed my pace, and as I saw the dark, I ran towards its core. As I realized this, the edges of my vision,

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beginning to engulf me in its cold embrace. I tried to run from the oncoming black, staggered, and fell.

It seemed I fell for hours, down a hole from nowhere. The dark was all around me, but not absolute. There were glimmers of red shining through the blackness. I could sense something that made all my terrors worse at this moment, a presence, watching me, pulling me down, down, down.... I felt like Alice falling down the rabbit hole... I could see something in the distance, coming up fast. It was, or so it looked from this distance, a pulsating red rim, round in shape, jagged, the color of blood. The red was the same color and had the same pulsating feeling that the red glowing glimmers had. Within this horrid red maw, there was a deep black presence that radiated with malice and hunger. Fear tore at my heart as I realized that this was the being that I feared, the one that chased me, the one that haunted every dream and every waking hour. I struggled, but could do nothing, I was falling. The rim came closed, closer, until it swallowed me whole and sealed behind me. As the rim flew past me, I felt the cold ice of fear prick my heart. As the black closed in on my vision, I knew that I would soon leave this world forever. Soon, but not yet. Then everything went dark.

As I awoke, I recognized the room I was in, the white walls, the small window, I was in the white room. I hated the white room, and it takes a long time to leave. Luckily, it only took a month to perfect the act, to convince them I was fine, even if I was not. The encounter with this creature of darkness and malice had shaken me severely. I almost felt like my soul had been broken by terror, as if my very identity had changed. I could feel it, strong, brave Arin was gone, only weak, terrified, helpless Nira was left, I was no longer Arin, I was Nira now, and my will was fading. After the encounter, it only got worse. Every time I turned I saw it in the corner of my eye.. A black fog, following me, monitoring my every movement. I saw the red glimmers, they almost seemed like eyes now, watching me from every shadow. It almost felt like there were two worlds superimposed in top of each other, but they could never blend, like ice and fire. I began to wake at night, screaming and weeping in fear for my life. They began to have to sedate me to get me to calm down. One night, I had a particularly vivid nightmare, in-which the creature from the chasm devoured the moon, not unlike Apophis the serpent, the chaos god of Egypt, was said to have tried to consume the sun and end thus the world. When I woke, the

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I must have blacked out for a moment, but my brief slip between worlds gave the beast the chance it had been waiting for.... When I came to, but a moment later, the creature towered over me, and the earth shook as it tipped its head back and uttered a guttural howl. I shook with terror, my body frozen in place, I was defenseless.

## Chapter 2 by ParadoxalMirrors



Shivers coursed down my spine, seizing up my body in fits of mortal terror. Hot breaths seeped from between my lips, but it all felt cold to my goosebump-ridden skin. This darkness, towering over me in the form of a red and black monster, seemed to be a minion from Hell itself. It had no definition on its face--no definable features other than sharp, jagged lines of bone and flesh--and by default, displayed no emotion. Still, I could feel the rage oozing from dark, leathery skin, its breath seeming to come from the entirety of its form.

The smell of smoke and the tang of ash left my lungs shaken and damaged, and yet...

Breath refused to come, my eyes so widely opened it felt as if my lids had stuck. There was a prolonged tension as the moment stretched as far as it was able, the beast enjoying the finality of its conquest. Tears streamed down my cheeks slowly, my mouth agape in a silent scream that would haunt me even in the afterlife.

As the beast settled against its haunches, I lost what remained of my sanity. No, no--I can't die here!

It lunged, and I choked on my horrified final thoughts.

My arms finally move, raising to protect my face in a pathetic, pointless sort of way. It's just what you do when things leap at you, after all.

The earth beneath me rumbles again, crackling and hissing as pressure builds and snaps beneath the hardened surface. Then--

A burst of dirt, stone, and flailing grass explodes upwards in a geyser-like fountain of earthen debris, ramming into the chin of the creature. It was already changing forms with the darkness, morphing and warping into a more agile body so that it might navigate the earthquake. Why bother? Did it know something I didn't?!

As the thought leaves my mind, hanging in the darkness that the creature pulls into it, the

ground beneath me splits wide open.

I fall, that horrified wail of terror still hanging in the darkness of my throat.

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I fell, and kept falling. I wouldn't stop. It horrified me. The darkness of the tremor that I was falling into. The dim, and almost non-existent light that existed on the surface was fading, and fading. I couldn't see anything anymore. Everything was just black. I could feel the darkness embracing me. The soft whistle of wind in my ears as I fell. Falling, falling, falling.

I hit the ground with a soft, 'thump!' I had hit something soft, but I had no idea what it was. Well, to be honest I had no idea where I was either, so that was a given. I didn't care about that either though. What I did care about, was the darkness. There was no light. There was no light. I couldn't handle this. My worst fear, my strongest enemy, it was here. Wrapped around me. It was everywhere. I was frozen. Unable to move due to the psychological agony of basking in the agent of horror that they called darkness. The absence of light.

It was more than just the absence of light though.

I felt something I could feel it in the darkness. It stalked me, not needing light to see. It knew that I couldn't move. It was the darkness, or the things that hid in the depths of it anyway. I knew I couldn't run. I couldn't hide. I had nowhere to go. I had nowhere to hide. I was in the darkness. I would just stand here, and rot until it came to me. I knew that there was no escape from this.

However, at that moment something strange happened. There was a light, spiraling down from above me. I could not make out what it was, it just was light. Faint, but definitely there. This light descended, like a mother dove would descend to their children. I did not know what happened, whether I was saved or not. I just knew that there wasn't complete darkness here anymore.

The darkness knew this. It knew this. It did not like the light. It knew that it had to dispose of me quickly, before this light got to me, or it might lose its prey. It shot forward, too dark for me to see, pushing me to the edge of the cavern. I could feel it's otherworldly claws ringed around my neck, it's needle-like jaws snapping just in front of my face, it's cold, otherworldly breath spreading across my face.

This was the end.

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